When we access a certain situation with any way of knowing that being sense perception, language, emotion and reason, we often find that there are aspects of each way of knowing that are used to justify the notion. An example being, knowing your nationality, one can simply prove this by reason but if he/she wants a strong justification, they will find that may venture into language and possibly sense perception depending on the direction of the argument.

I shall be focusing this essay on a situation that is not so similar but still requires the ways of knowing. This being the decision whether Data was the property of Starfleet, opening my argument, data is a machine; an android if you will therefore classifying Data as ‘property’ seems logical because a machine always has ownership whether it is owned by the creator or the one that purchased it. Thus the decision Pulaski came to was ethical from a logical stand-point. This is analyzing the situation with reason and sense perception. However, when we analyze the same situation using emotion as a way of knowing, it contrasts the other justification I mentioned earlier because the members of star fleet grew an emotional bond with Data as Ricker said he did not want to stand against Data in court because he believed Data was his friend therefore showing compassion for one another. Now if Pulaski was to again decide that Data was merely a machine from this perspective, it would be ethically wrong of her to condemn something well in this case someone who shares compassion with other human beings as a machine that has no say in what happens to it.

The most intriguing parts of this episode of star trek are the court scenes where Picard and Riker both take Data to the stand to justify their views. Picard observed that his best argument could be based on sense perception knowing that everyone there could relate to this as all humans embark on it every day also because it is a strong aspect and can easily be manipulated to win an argument regardless of this; he uses emotion and reason to support his argument. He then asks the commander whether he has friendly affection for Data and the commander replies that he does but as a machine. Picard then asks the commander what he plans on doing with Data and he replies he plans on studying the creation and replicating Data and Picard argues that Data would then become a race and every race is considered sentient because it has conscious, it is able to learn and cope to new situations. Thereby this classifies Data as a sentient being according to this criterion.

Riker uses a similar technique but does not strongly appeal to words but to actions as well. He asks Data a few questions regarding his identity as an android, he then asks Data to bend an extremely thick metal that no man could ever bend and Data does this with ease. Riker used this to prove that Data is a machine because humans do not possess such extraordinary strength. Riker then asks data if he could remove his hand and Riker does so again by visual proof shows that Data is a machine. Riker’s penultimate action was to switch Data off by the push/flick of a button on Data again by visual aide proves that Data is a machine because humans well sentient beings in this context cannot be turned on and off by buttons. The strongest point made by Riker after his demonstrations left the court bewildered as he said “Pinocchio is broken. Its strings have been cut”. This statement is powerful as it appeals to logical, emotional, reasonable and linguist (because of his diction for this particular quote) aspects therefore rendering any counter argument useless as he has used every way of knowing to justify his claim.

Overall, I believe as the global modernization has led humans to think of inanimate things as sentimental because we use them every day, we need them and we want them. Data being an android made this even stronger as the could interact verbally, physically, socially and mentally and according to the criterion of the commander, this would classify Data as sentient therefore the collusion between whether Data being seen as sentient or as a machine easily coincide due to their lack justified and agreed differences as people have different views on such a sensitive topic.